

The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
2007 Economic Growth Plan

INTRODUCTION

The New Jersey Meadowlands District is home to a strong, vibrant and evolving economic engine. To continue meeting the challenges of the 21st century, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission (NJMC) must work to coordinate and implement policies and strategies that best promote and enhance the region's economy. Therefore, this report outlines five strategies and several recommendations to be implemented by the NJMC to best serve the region's economic needs. Together, these strategies and recommendations emphasize a regional coordination of information and resources focused on economic growth in the Meadowlands region. The following strategies and recommendations are outlined in this report:

- First, the NJMC should work to coordinate efforts and develop a coherent marketing message for the region's economic growth efforts. To do this, it is recommended that the NJMC establish an Economic Growth Strategy Group, improve business access to state assistance, and develop procedures to effectively monitor and evaluate economic growth strategies in the Meadowlands region.
- Second, the NJMC should work to develop and prepare the workforce by establishing a Meadowlands Workforce Development Consortium.
- Third, the NJMC should work to maintain, develop and upgrade the infrastructure of the region by promoting responsible land use planning policies, improving the transportation system, implementing policies that reduce the impacts of flooding, initiating policies that increase the region's independence from traditional energy sources while reducing the region's greenhouse gas emission impacts, and researching alternative waste disposal methods.
- Fourth, the NJMC should foster future economic growth by targeting the business industries and sectors, cited in the Governor's Economic Growth Strategy Report for economic growth efforts, establishing a Meadowlands Business Incubator to attract and assist current and future businesses, and supporting small, women-owned, minority-owned and local businesses consistent with Governor Corzine's Executive Order Number 34.
- Last, the NJMC should work to increase government efficiency by increasing the sharing of municipal services, expanding the Municipal Equipment Pool, and assisting applicants in properly moving through permitting and application processes.

To implement these strategies and recommendations, it is proposed that the NJMC establish an Office of Economic Growth within its administrative offices at One DeKorte Park Plaza in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. This Office will be charged with the execution, oversight, development, and communication of policies relating to economic growth at the NJMC. If adopted by the New Jersey Meadowlands Board of Commissioners, these strategies will constitute the NJMC's economic growth strategies for 2007.

BACKGROUND

The New Jersey Meadowlands District (District) is comprised of a 30.4 square-mile region located five miles west of New York City with approximately 500,000 residents. The region is served by six major roadways, ten rail lines and eight passenger rail stations. In addition, the Meadowlands region is home to several bus services, three “park and rides,” Teterboro Airport, and is proximate to some of the busiest ports and airports in the world. The District’s close proximity to ports, airports and other transportation resources closely links the region with a growing global economy. This infrastructure, combined with the skilled and dedicated workforce available in the region, has helped to provide the Meadowlands District with a strong, vibrant and growing economy.

Before the advent of the NJMC, certain forms of economic development in the District took priority over environmental concerns. While this stimulated economic growth in the short term, it also left polluted land and a mounting environmental burden on current and future generations. The cost of mismanagement of environmental resources is being felt today, as we are forced to deal with contaminated water and soil, while protecting what is left of our depleted environmental infrastructure.

The NJMC has made environmental protection a priority for the region and has enacted numerous measures to try to remediate the pollution that has been left. A significant step towards changing the way growth and development has occurred in the region was taken in January 2004 when the NJMC unveiled its first Master Plan in more than 30 years. This move was further bolstered at the first Meadowlands Economic Conference, in December 2004, when the NJMC established a long range financial support structure for Master Plan objectives by establishing a \$33 million fund. This master plan provides the foundation and vision for development, economic growth and environmental protection for the region and has spurred the implementation of each of the NJMC’s mandates.

Today, the NJMC is successfully weaving its three mandates of development, environmental protection and waste management together to promote a more responsible and effective policy approach to planning and guiding development for the District. For example, today the NJMC’s land use regulations include incentives for developers to adhere to “green building principles,” and staff is exploring alternative fuel uses of the methane that is collected from its landfills. In addition, the NJMC is pursuing policies to decrease the region’s dependence on traditional fossil fuel-based energy sources by promoting renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency. This initiative will not only help insulate businesses from volatile energy prices, but it will help in reducing regional greenhouse gas emissions which are contributing to global climate change. These policies are examples of how the NJMC is proving that economic development and environmental protection can coexist.

CURRENT ECONOMIC DATA

According to an economic growth assessment conducted by Rutgers University for the Meadowlands District, the District is currently home to 80,000 jobs with 57,000 additional jobs forecasted by the year 2020. This increase in jobs is expected to add \$4.8 billion in annual wealth, \$3.3 billion in labor income, and \$139 million in local property taxes. The NJMC’s

Department of Land Use Management estimates that there will be a proportional addition of new housing units, reflective of this growth. In summary, the New Jersey Meadowlands will experience an increase in housing and a 70 percent increase in jobs over the next 15 years. The NJMC is currently evaluating this data to assess the capacity of the existing and planned infrastructure for the region and to plan for the region's needs. In addition, this report will address many of the concerns raised by Rutgers' economic assessment of the region.

At the second Meadowlands Economic Conference in September 2006, Rutgers University Professors Nancy Mantell and Michael Lahr provided the following table to compare and contrast the current breakdown of the industries represented in the Meadowlands District, Bergen and Hudson Counties, and the State of New Jersey.

FIGURE 1

	Meadowlands	Bergen - Hudson - Passaic	New Jersey
Construction and Other	3 %	4 %	4 %
Manufacturing	27 %	9 %	8 %
Wholesale trade	18 %	8 %	6 %
Retail trade	9 %	11 %	12 %
Transportation & Warehousing	12 %	5 %	4 %
Utilities	0 %	0 %	0 %
Information	5 %	3 %	2 %
Finance & insurance	3 %	7 %	5 %
Real estate & rental	1 %	2 %	1 %
Professional & related services	5 %	6 %	7 %
Management of companies m g m t	0 % 4 %	3 % 7 %	2 % 6 %
Educational services	1 %	2 %	2 %
Health care & social services	4 %	12 %	12 %
Arts & Entertainment	2 %	1 %	1 %
Hospitality services	4 %	6 %	7 %
Other private services	1 %	4 %	4 %
Public administration	1 %	13 %	16 %

This information provides us with a snapshot in time of which industries are most prevalent in the Meadowlands District today. Bergen, Hudson and Passaic Counties appear to be microcosms of the state's proportionate distribution of jobs, while the Meadowlands District is drastically different. The Meadowlands District has a far greater representation from the manufacturing, retail trade and transportation and warehousing industries than the rest of the counties and the state overall. Rutgers University estimated that job distribution in the region will shift dramatically by the year 2020, with the largest percentage of jobs growing in retail trade, business services and finance.

In the face of so much change, the region must be proactive in shaping its own economic destiny. A central vision and strategy is necessary to focus the region's resources on future economic growth. Strategies must be enacted to promote the economic strengths in the region, direct

future economic growth and make the needed adjustments to meet the tomorrow's demands with today's information. As a multi-faceted state agency, the NJMC is uniquely positioned to take the lead on this effort by coordinating resources, vision and policies pertaining to the economic vitality of the region. The NJMC's role as a regional facilitator of policy with its local municipalities, counties, sister state agencies, and state departments makes it uniquely qualified to spearhead, facilitate and coordinate the District's economic growth strategies.

In prior years, the Meadowlands region only had to compete with growing metropolises around the country for the location of businesses and jobs. In today's global economy, New Jersey's businesses and economic regions compete with other enterprises and economic nodes around the world. Businesses are mobile and constantly searching for locations and talent that offer a competitive edge. The NJMC must actively and effectively build a favorable business climate that will help existing businesses remain and grow in the region while attracting new companies and well-paying jobs. The NJMC must consider the impact that public policies will have on the business climate, capital investments and ultimately job growth.

The following Economic Growth Plan identifies the region's five strategies for growth and articulates the specific action steps that the NJMC will take, in partnership with state and local governments, business, labor, education and community leaders, to encourage and support the creation of jobs. The NJMC can ensure that existing resources are used in a tightly-focused and organized manner to support economic growth.

STRATEGY 1: *Coordinating Efforts and Message for the Region*

In today's economy, the Meadowlands District must compete with business centers surrounding New York City, throughout the country and the world. Advances in telecommunications and transportation have allowed companies to locate their places of business on other continents while still delivering their products to consumers in the northeastern United States. Changes in the needs and concerns of the business community are a constant, as business leaders continually seek new ways to be competitive and successful. The Meadowlands region can not afford to be reactive to these changes, but must find a way to meet these needs and establish itself as a thriving economic engine. At the first Meadowlands Economic Conference, a policy goal was established to mark this region out as a critical component of the tri-state economic engine. Economic data developed since then has brought into focus the Meadowlands' role within the regional and national economy. To implement this strategy further, the NJMC should consider implementing the following recommendations:

First, it is recommended that the NJMC establish an Economic Growth Strategy Group. The NJMC must take the lead on coordinating and implementing economic growth strategies for the region. To best accomplish this goal, the NJMC should work with state and local governments to develop and implement marketing strategies for the region. The NJMC should coordinate the region's efforts with the Governor Corzine's recently released *Economic Growth Strategy for the State of New Jersey 2007* and also with the following state and local agencies:

- New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
- Governor's Office of Economic Growth
- New Jersey Economic Development Authority
- New Jersey Commerce, Economic Growth and Tourism Commission

- Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Hudson County Workforce Investment Board and Economic Development Office
- Bergen County Workforce Investment Board and Economic Development Office
- 14 Meadowlands Municipalities

Representatives designated by each of these entities will comprise the NJMC Economic Growth Group. The local organizations such as the Bergen County and Hudson County Workforce Investment Boards and Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce will provide the NJMC with data and feedback specific to the region, while state agencies, such as the Governor's Office of Economic Growth, will help the NJMC coordinate the region's efforts with the Governor's statewide economic growth strategies. This group will work together to ensure that resources and policies targeted at economic growth are coordinated and focused on a singular vision. NJMC staff should meet at least on a quarterly basis with this group to discuss and evaluate economic growth strategies for the region. This group will provide the NJMC with valuable insight and information specific to both the region and the state to be used in the formulation and coordination of economic growth policies and marketing efforts.

In particular, the NJMC should work closely with the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce, building upon the marketing successes of the Meadowlands Liberty Convention and Visitors Bureau, its information kiosks, training programs, annual trade shows and events. The experience gained by the Chamber while marketing the region as a tourism destination, as well as the Chamber's established link to the business community, will be invaluable in the creation of a marketing strategy specifically targeting businesses.

Second, it is recommended that the NJMC embark on a series of initiatives to improve business access to state assistance. The NJMC should implement a series of changes to provide increased access to businesses seeking government assistance. The NJMC should consider establishing a telephone hotline for businesses to call for information regarding available forms of government assistance. All business inquiries will be handled by staff, including but not limited to questions about NJMC and state land use regulations, questions on roads, utilities, rail lines and other infrastructure in the region, business assistance programs available from state and local governments, and any other questions, comments or concerns that businesses currently located in the region, or considering locating to the region, may have. NJMC staff will work with state and local governments to provide assistance to the business community. In addition, it is recommended that a description of NJMC services for businesses be included on the agency's website with an e-mail link for questions, comments and concerns. The site will build upon presentations and data from the Meadowlands Economic Summit to include economic growth reports prepared by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy of Rutgers University. This website will serve as the face of the region's economic growth strategies, activities and statistics. All inquiries from businesses will be answered by the NJMC staff with activity logs kept to compile data on relevant issues and frequent concerns. In addition, the Business Incubator described in Strategy 4 of this report, will provide businesses with another resource for businesses to obtain information.

Last, it is recommended that the NJMC develop procedures that effectively monitor and evaluate economic growth strategies in the Meadowlands region. The NJMC should authorize Rutgers University, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy to conduct a detailed economic growth study for the Meadowlands District on an annual basis.

This study will assist the NJMC with the formulation of economic growth strategies based upon current and projected economic data for the District, the region (including the two counties), and the state. This study should include the following information:

- Percentage breakdowns of the industries represented in the District, region and state
- Five, ten and fifteen year forecasts of industry trends in the District
- Regional, national and global economic data for the strength or weaknesses of the industries currently located in the District
- An inventory of current and future infrastructure demands by industries in the region
- A current breakdown of the workforce living in the region compared to the workforce working in the region.

This information will be used by the NJMC, in conjunction with state and local government entities, to develop yearly economic growth policies, goals and deliverables. The NJMC should work with the Bloustein School to focus this study on data that is most relevant to current economic trends, projected economic trends, or economic growth strategies in the District.

In addition, the NJMC staff should work to develop an electronic comprehensive tracking system for the agency's and region's economic growth policies, projects and data. The tracking system will track all economic growth projects in the region, with all activities outlined in this report including the work of the Business Incubator. NJMC staff will constantly update and monitor this information. The tracking system will provide a yearly summary of all economic growth activities undertaken by the NJMC.

An annual summary of the NJMC's and region's economic growth activities (provided from the tracking system) will be provided in an annual NJMC Economic Growth Report. This report will include the region's successes or failures at meeting various economic goals and deliverables as they are established by the NJMC, and outline the goals and deliverables for the following year. The report should be publicly introduced by each December 1st. This report will effectively provide the NJMC and region with an annual report card to be used when drafting future economic policies, and allow for comments, questions or concerns to be addressed by the agency's stakeholders. Also, this document will promote transparency and openness about the NJMC's economic growth policies, strategies and vision for the upcoming year.

Together, these recommendations will help to establish a system that coordinates the resources of the region and state, and establishes an open line of communication to the business community. The website, telephone hotline, and annual Economic Growth Report will help establish strong communication lines while implementing, coordinating, and communicating economic growth strategies.

STRATEGY 2: *Develop and Prepare the Workforce*

At the second Meadowlands Economic Conference, Rutgers University presented data predicting a major industry shift within the Meadowlands region. In response to this anticipated industry shift, the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce is currently working with the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development of Rutgers University to collect information and recommendations on how to best train and equip the region's workforce for future industry demands. The NJMC must share this information with its constituents and coordinate programs

and policies that best prepare the workforce for the shifting business climate of the Meadowlands.

To effectively enact this strategy, it is recommended that the NJMC establish a Meadowlands Workforce Development Consortium. In this competitive global workplace environment, the NJMC must work to meet the employment needs of the region by assisting the region's job seekers, including future workforce members currently in the education system, to obtain the skills and education needed in a competitive workplace environment. The members of this consortium will consist of the following:

- New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
- Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce (MRCC)
- Bergen County Workforce Investment Board (BCWIB)
- Hudson County Workforce Investment Board (HCWIB)
- Bergen County Community College
- Hudson County Community College
- Local Labor Unions

The purpose of this group will be to review demographic data of the existing regional workforce and determine what additional skills will be needed to accommodate the projected industry growth in the region and how to best meet these workforce needs. This group will submit relevant information for posting on the NJMC's website link for businesses, which will include a link to the MRCC's job bank. The NJMC will chair the Consortium, and coordinate all meetings and relevant exchange of information between members. A summary of the activities undertaken by this group will be presented to the Commission on an annual basis along with recommendations to improve workforce development.

The Consortium will be directed to create two subcommittees to provide targeted support and information pertaining to its mission statement. The first subcommittee will focus on education needs for the region and should consist of representatives from the local school districts and the local colleges and universities, as well as the Bergen and Hudson County Community College Consortium members. The education subcommittee will provide the consortium with relevant guidance, recommendations and information pertaining to the education and training focuses of the region's students. Specifically, this subcommittee will provide the consortium with valuable statistics on enrollment, majors, professional clubs and organizations, and other information deemed relevant by the consortium. Initially, this subcommittee should conduct an audit of future career programs available in the Meadowlands District for high school, vocational school and college students. This information will be useful to the Consortium to determine the current links to the workforce with the local high schools and colleges.

The second subcommittee will focus on economic development and should consist of the Bergen and Hudson County Economic Development Commission, as well as the MRCC, BCWIB and HCWIB Consortium members. This subcommittee will provide the consortium with information pertaining to the economic development initiatives and strategies of two counties represented in the Meadowlands District. The Consortium will direct the efforts of the subcommittees, and use these efforts to assist in the formulation and implementation of strategies and policies relevant to its mission.

A strong coordinated effort is necessary to best prepare the region's workforce for the challenges of an ever-changing workforce environment. The establishment of the Meadowlands Workforce Development Consortium will formalize the process necessary to efficiently utilize the region's resources for constructive policies that effectively implement workforce development policies and initiatives.

STRATEGY 3: *Maintain, Develop and Upgrade the Infrastructure of the Region*

Similar to other parts of New Jersey, the Meadowlands region faces a stressed transportation system, recurrent flooding and rising energy prices. All of these obstacles reduce the bottom line for businesses. In response, the NJMC should promote sustainable growth with an emphasis on strategic infrastructure investments, such as greyfields and brownfields redevelopment that support continued economic growth while enhancing and preserving the environment. To implement this strategy it is advised that the NJMC enact the following recommendations:

First, it is recommended that the NJMC work to further promote responsible land use planning policies throughout the Meadowlands Region. The NJMC will work with the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA), to ensure that the NJMC and Meadowlands municipalities' planning strategies are consistent with the principles of smart growth and the policies of the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan). While the NJMC's regional zoning and planning jurisdiction spans 14 municipalities, it does not encompass the entirety of any of those municipalities. OSG and the NJMC can work closely together to link up the NJMC and State Plan jurisdictions of each municipality, to dovetail planning efforts and ensure that planning is happening comprehensively for the entirety of each municipality.

In order to do this, the NJMC should facilitate the 14 Meadowlands municipalities' participation in the State Planning Commission's Plan Endorsement process, a comprehensive planning and analysis process that evaluates a municipality's or region's planning for consistency with the State Plan. Plan Endorsement helps municipalities develop a plan for the entire community that takes into account affordable housing requirements, smart growth principles and local environmental resources. The Commission will provide, to the extent possible, financial assistance to its municipalities to support this endeavor.

Included in these efforts should be a cooperative effort on behalf of the OSG, the NJEDA, the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA), and the NJMC to redevelop the region's greyfields and brownfields. Focusing resources on redeveloping these properties will help improve the region's economy by utilizing once vacant and under-utilized properties for economic growth. The redevelopment of greyfields and brownfields will help the region embark on new economic growth projects by recycling sites of past economic failure into future economic growth opportunities and successes. These sites can become valuable contributions to the community. A coordinated effort to redevelop these sites will provide the region with an opportunity for new economic growth while preserving the integrity of the surrounding environment.

The NJMC should work with the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) of the DCA to obtain COAH certification for all 14 Meadowlands municipalities. A 1985 New Jersey Supreme Court ruling determined that citizens of New Jersey have a constitutional right to obtain affordable

housing. The ruling obligated municipalities to establish realistic opportunities for the provision of fair-share, low and moderate income housing through their planning and zoning authorities. Previously, the NJMC has allocated funding and provided technical assistance for municipalities to draft and implement COAH plans. The NJMC should work to ensure the region's compliance with affordable housing development. It is also recognized that facilitating a range of housing stock options and locating affordable housing adjacent to mass transit will allow a full spectrum of the District workforce to reside near their jobsites, reducing the strain placed on the transportation system.

Second, it is recommended that the NJMC work to improve the transportation system within the Meadowlands District. The NJMC must continue implementing policies that build upon the Transportation Systems Strategies outlined in the NJMC Master Plan and the Meadowlands Mobility 2030 technical report. At the first Meadowlands Economic Conference, a high priority was given to developing better regional tools to address transportation bottlenecks within the District. This was reaffirmed at the second Meadowlands Economic Conference with an emphasis on internal circulation within the District. Efforts in this direction include the completion and full implementation of the Transportation Plan for the Meadowlands Transportation Planning District. The Hackensack Meadowlands Transportation Planning District Act (enacted Jun 24, 2005), requires the development of a Transportation Plan in the Meadowlands District to establish goals, policies, needs, and improvement priorities for all modes of transportation within the District for a 20-year horizon. The Plan accounts for likely future growth within the District and identifies transportation improvements that will be needed to support anticipated development. It is recommended that this Plan be completed by May 1, 2007 and that the NJMC staff use this plan to implement strategies and policies that work to strengthen the region's transportation infrastructure.

Third, it is recommended that the NJMC implement policies that reduce the impacts of flooding in the District. In October 2004 the NJMC commenced its efforts to assist local governments with flood relief through a regional floodplain management plan. Then, in December 2004, flood relief was added to the NJMC's overall economic growth policy at the first Meadowlands Economic Conference. Consistent with these two efforts, the NJMC recently commissioned Rutgers University to conduct a Stormwater Utility study to determine the feasibility of the NJMC becoming a stormwater utility to serve the region. Under this plan, the NJMC would assume the responsibilities of upgrading and maintaining the current stormwater infrastructure and potentially serve as a first responder during flood crises. Currently, municipalities, which in many cases have the primary responsibility for many flood structures, are overburdened. Often they must contend with flood control structures that are remote, inaccessible and difficult to safely maintain.

In addition, it is the opinion of NJMC staff, and finding of the Hackensack Meadowlands Floodplain Management plan, that much of the flooding in the Meadowlands District could be alleviated if the current system were effectively maintained. This would eliminate much of the flooding that disrupts commuter and commercial vehicular flow and business operations. It is crucial that the NJMC continue work to alleviate the flooding problems in the District that negatively impact local businesses and the economy of the region. It is also recommended that the NJMC continue its telephone hotline to be used by businesses and residents to report flooding after emergency services have been notified. This information can be used to assess the

economic impacts of flooding and also can be used to mobilize first responders during flood crises.

Fourth, it is recommended that the NJMC initiate more aggressive policies that further increase the region's independence from traditional energy sources while reducing the region's greenhouse gas emission impacts on the environment. The NJMC should continue to promote and support the growth of renewable energy and energy efficiency in the region. These efforts will help drive down energy prices while protecting the environment from carbon dioxide and other harmful greenhouse gas emissions (emitted from traditional energy sources) and providing a more stable and sustainable energy source. The greenhouse gasses that are emitted from traditional energy sources contribute to global climate change which may result in a significant sea level rise that would cause wide-spread tidal flooding throughout the Meadowlands region. Global climate change stands to be a strategic challenge to economic growth in the future and though the Meadowlands District's impact on the global phenomena is small, the District cannot afford to wait for the pace of international action to match the threat.

The NJMC should examine more aggressive regulation changes that reduce the region's demand for traditional energy sources. These regulation changes should include additional renewable energy and energy efficiency requirements. The Meadowlands' Renewable Energy Master Plan, which is currently being drafted, will provide the District with detailed initial strategies and goals to best promote the implementation and installation of renewable energy technologies, alternative energy technologies, and energy efficiency applications.

In addition, the NJMC should charge the Business Incubator, outlined in Strategy 4 and Meadowlands Workforce Development Consortium, with targeting businesses in the renewable energy industry for location within the District. As energy prices rise and the threats of global climate change are realized, world leaders are beginning to look for alternative sources of energy. Renewable energy technologies promise to provide part of the solution to the world's growing energy crisis. Therefore, the NJMC should work to locate renewable energy businesses and technology centers in the Meadowlands District. These businesses promise to provide high-technology jobs and an increased supply of renewable energy products to the region. The NJMC should establish a goal of locating at least one renewable energy business in the Meadowlands District by December 31, 2007.

Furthermore, the NJMC should continue its commitment to the principles of the Kyoto Protocol for global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The NJMC should examine more aggressive strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the NJMC facilities and work to implement innovative policies that further reduce the District's output of greenhouse gas emissions. The Meadowlands municipalities should be further encouraged to endorse the principles of the Kyoto Protocol by signing onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. In addition, the NJMC should establish a series of programs to increase awareness and knowledge about the causes and effects of global climate change. These programs should be directed at providing information to local high school students, community college students, business leaders, local political leaders, and local constituents. Specifically, it is strongly recommended that the NJMC conduct and organize a conference on Global Climate Change next year to educate the community about the subject of global significance.

Last, it is recommended that the NJMC authorize a research study to determine the feasibility of alternative waste disposal methods. It is critically important that the Meadowlands region research ways to increase its sustainability. In addition to decreasing the region's reliance on outside energy sources, the NJMC must also look for ways to decrease the region's dependence on outside sources for solid waste disposal. It is recommended that the NJMC investigate alternative methods to dispose of a portion of the region's municipal solid waste. While most orphaned, abandoned and previously unregulated landfills in the Meadowlands District have been closed and are being remediated under NJMC jurisdiction, the production of household waste in the region continues to increase with population growth. Technology continues to advance and develop alternative methods to dispose of this waste. The NJMC should authorize research to determine the feasibility of hosting such a technology in the Meadowlands District. The results of this research should be presented in next year's Meadowlands Economic Growth Plan.

The NJMC should coordinate infrastructure improvements (including transportation and energy) projects with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority (NJSEA). These two entities have several large projects that will greatly impact the existing infrastructure of the region. It is important that the NJMC coordinates efforts with the PANYNJ and the NJSEA to best determine the current and future infrastructure needs of the region.

The economic vitality of the Meadowlands region will be determined by the strength of its infrastructure. This infrastructure includes the region's transportation system, susceptibility to flooding and energy security. It is necessary that these infrastructure needs are maintained, developed and upgraded for the region's economy to thrive and compete in the global economy.

STRATEGY 4: *Target and Direct Future Economic Growth*

Governor Jon S. Corzine recently released the *Economic Growth Strategy for the State of New Jersey 2007*. This report outlines the strategies, priorities and action steps that the State of New Jersey must implement to advance its own economic growth. In this report, Governor Corzine emphasizes the types of businesses that should be targeted for growth. The report states:

“...to ensure that state resources are targeted in the most effective manner, the state's economic growth efforts will further focus on industries and sectors that are likely to benefit from state assistance and create sustainable above-average-wage job growth for the state's residents...”

(Economic Growth Strategy for the State of New Jersey, page 10).

To implement this strategy the NJMC should implement the following recommendations:

First, it is recommended that the NJMC target economic growth efforts on the specific industries and sectors stated in the Governor's Economic Growth Strategy Report. The following are industries and sectors that are most likely to benefit from NJMC work to advance the Governor's initiative and establish strategies to focus the region's resources to encourage the growth of the following businesses as stated in the Governor's Economic Growth Report:

- Small and medium-sized businesses, which represent 96 percent of all businesses and 36 percent of all jobs. The state's small and medium-sized businesses are most likely to benefit from state assistance as they work to remain profitable and grow.
- Jobs that pay above-median salaries and provide health benefits. The state's economic growth efforts should be focused on creating well-paying jobs for state residents.
- Industry sectors that are currently concentrated in the state and region. Industries that are already concentrated in the state are located here because they depend on the state's talented workers and close proximity to many large markets. As a result, these sectors, which include financial services, information technology, life sciences, communications, logistics, agribusiness, and gaming/tourism, represent important opportunities for future economic growth.
- Industry sectors that are expected to grow nationally and internationally over the next 10 years. Growing sectors are most likely to provide sustainable job growth for the region.

The economic growth policies and goals for the Meadowlands region must correspond with those outlined in Governor Corzine's report. Specifically, the NJMC should utilize the economic data prepared by Rutgers University as part of an annual economic growth report to further target specific industry sectors that meet the types of businesses stated above.

Second, it is recommended that the NJMC establish a Meadowlands Business Incubator.

To target and direct future economic growth, it is essential that the NJMC establish a program to provide services to potential businesses to ease their transition into the region. Therefore, it is recommended that the NJMC establish a Meadowlands Business Incubator, consistent with a mandate established at the 2006 Meadowlands Economic Conference, to further facilitate the location of businesses and future industries into the Meadowlands District that comply with the Governor's strategies outlined in his Economic Growth report.

This Incubator will work to provide new businesses with office space and connectivity to government resources. It will work to secure low interest loans and grants from the state and federal governments to assist businesses interested in locating into the region. The Business Incubator will also be used when targeting specialized industries to locate within the District, like the renewable energy industry, and other industries that comply with the strategies in this report.

Also, the Business Incubator would be charged with increasing communication with small, women-owned, minority-owned and local businesses. *The Economic Growth Strategy for the State of New Jersey* states that "access to capital has been, and remains, a critical issue for emerging and growing business, particularly those owned by women and minorities." The Governor's report directs the state's departments and authorities to work to provide additional opportunities and opportunities to this business sector. The Business Incubator can work to further this goal by the Governor to effectively promote and support the region's small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

The efforts of the Business Incubator will also be focused on attracting businesses that correspond with the long-term economic growth vision for the region. All activities and projects

undertaken by the Business Incubator should be monitored by the NJMC electronic comprehensive monitoring system, outlined in Strategy 1 of this report.

Last, it is recommended that the NJMC implement policies and strategies that support small, women-owned, minority-owned and local businesses. Earlier this year, Governor Jon S. Corzine signed Executive Order (EO) 34 in recognition of the need to leverage the state's purchasing power to help facilitate growth among New Jersey's women-owned and minority-owned businesses. This Executive Order established a Division of Minority and Women Business Development within the Office of Economic Growth to track the state's efforts and progress in pursuing this initiative. In addition to Executive Order 34, the Governor's Economic Growth Report also lists the growth of small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses as a statewide priority to encourage economic growth.

In conjunction with Governor Corzine's EO 34 and the Governor's Economic Growth Report, it is recommended that the NJMC provide increased incentives to small, minority-owned and women-owned business to enhance growth in this sector of the economy. These incentives could include a higher prioritization for NJMC procurement if a business meets the criteria for small, minority-owned and/or women-owned business. It is recommended that the NJMC charge the NJMC's Department of Finance and Management with spearheading this initiative. These activities should be tracked in the NJMC electronic comprehensive tracking system. The Department of Finance and Management will monitor and report on minority-owned and women-owned business participation in the NJMC procurement process from issuance of public bid documents to contract awards.

In addition, the NJMC should develop a strategy to increase outreach efforts to small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses to increase awareness and understanding of NJMC and state procurement opportunities. The Business Incubator should be charged with increased outreach efforts with small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses. All public bid documents of the NJMC will be posted on the agency's website, and where possible the NJMC will provide links to other public bid documents being advertised by other state entities.

STRATEGY 5: *Increase Government Efficiency*

The NJMC recognizes that New Jersey suffers from high property taxes that put a strain on families and businesses who wish to remain in the state. In order to increase government efficiency, it is urged that the NJMC enact the following recommendations:

First, it is recommended that the NJMC increase the sharing of municipal services in the Meadowlands District. One of the potential solutions to alleviate the property tax strain on citizens is to increase the sharing of services and equipment amongst Meadowlands District municipalities. Currently, the NJMC is undertaking a shared services study, which will include drafting an action plan and allocation of an initial sum of \$1 million in grant monies to promote the sharing of services between Meadowlands municipalities. This refocused regional approach to services is necessary to provide increased services to the businesses and residents of the area while decreasing their property tax burdens. The NJMC should provide increased financial incentives, utilizing the \$1 million allocation, for municipalities that submit joint grant applications. Over the next twelve months, it is advised that the NJMC Executive Director

develop a series of recommendations that will incentivize joint-municipal grant applications for all NJMC grants.

Second, it is recommended that the NJMC examine a further expansion of its Municipal Equipment Pool to provide the Municipalities with further technical assistance at no cost to taxpayers. This pool is maintained and operated by the NJMC staff and provides the Meadowlands region with much needed equipment support, such as stormwater maintenance. At this point, the program has provided Meadowlands municipalities with more than 700 hours of equipment support and nearly 1000 staff hours of support in 2006. In the past, these services would be contracted out at an hourly rate, costing each municipality thousands of dollars per year. An expansion of the equipment pool is recommended to further reduce the financial burden placed on Meadowlands municipalities to provide necessary support to their businesses and residents.

Last, it is recommended the NJMC analyze and implement policies that streamline state and local permitting processes. Strategy 1 listed several recommendations that the NJMC must implement to increase coordination of resources and vision among state and local governments. This concept must also be utilized to streamline local government in the Meadowlands region. Where possible the NJMC should work with other state agencies and local governments to develop policies that streamline the permitting process. It is important to discuss with the New Jersey Department of Environment Protection the feasibility of developing joint permitting and computer permitting processes that will be more efficient. It is recommended that over the next 12 months, the NJMC work to identify overlap in state and local permitting requirements, and pursue the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with these entities to reduce this redundancy where possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

Finally, it is recommended that the NJMC utilize the next 12 months commencing on November 28, 2006 to establish an Office of Economic Growth to develop and implement the economic growth strategies contemplated in this report. The Office of Economic Growth will be responsible for coordinating the activities of the NJMC with other state and local governments, and will take into consideration input from the region's citizens, community leaders, and businesses. Also, the Office of Economic Growth will oversee the operations and activities of the Meadowlands Workforce Development Consortium and the Meadowlands Business Incubator. The Office will be responsible for responding to questions from business leaders and developing an economic growth report for each upcoming year by December 1st of the previous year. The Office will develop a comprehensive vision for the NJMC's economic growth efforts.

All state and local government agencies must work together and collaborate with the private sector to increase economic growth opportunities in the region. The implementation of economic growth strategies identified in this report must incorporate environmental enhancement programs and initiatives, as well as correspond to and compliment the economic growth strategies outlined by the Governor.

The economic growth strategies outlined in this report must also be implemented in a manner that is fiscally sound, guided by the highest ethical standards, and focused on providing efficient

and responsive services for citizens and businesses while protecting and enhancing the environment.

The following measures are critical to the success of economic success for the region:

- This economic growth strategy report should be updated annually to reflect changing economic conditions, to interpret and disseminate new data, and to include feedback from all affected parties.
- The NJMC should identify measurable indicators and targets of success, monitor them consistently and provide yearly assessments of progress made to the public at a yearly Economic Growth Summit.
- The Economic Growth Summit will focus on the coordination of efforts, development of a vision for the region, and communication amongst the variety of NJMC stakeholders.
- The NJMC should continually monitor progress toward achieving the goals to ensure openness and accountability to the region's businesses, residents and other constituents.